

BRIDE of BATTLE

A Romance of the American Army Fighting on the Battlefields of France

By VICTOR ROUSSEAU

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CHAPTER XVII—Continued.

"Be silent, sir! Gentlemen," he commanded, addressing Mark and the Colonel, "you are interested in knowing what happened to this man Hampton. He could not rid himself of the belief that justice, though slow, is pretty sure. He had faith in God. Unfortunately he had less faith in himself. Am I wronging you, Hampton?" he continued, addressing Hartley.

"No, sir," muttered the man on the stretcher feebly.

"He wishes me to tell the whole story. He went to Cuba and flung in his lot with the rebels. He became disgusted with their means and methods, obtained a pardon from General Weyler, and took up his residence in Santiago. The outbreak of the war surprised him there. He knew that Santiago would fall, and he had been warned that he would receive short shrift at the hands of our people.

"He longed for death, but he had two things that kept alive the desire for life. One was his child, the other the desire for vindication, which had become a monomania. He tried to escape into the jungle. He saw that it was hopeless.

"He was hiding in a little hut when he heard footsteps. An American soldier, who had strayed from his company, was coming into the clearing. At that moment a stray bullet caught him in the head, killing him instantly. Hampton saw his chance. He took off the dead man's clothing and put it on; he dressed the body in his own. He knew that by this means he could pass through the lines in the guise of a wounded man, until he had a chance to get rid of his uniform in the cabin of some Cuban, who would be only too well pleased to give him some rags in exchange for it. And, leaving his money and papers on the dead man, he knew that he left his identity behind, for the bullet had destroyed the features.

"There was the child—but Hampton knew that he could take her no further. With the Americans she would receive food—which he had not—and shelter and protection. Afterward he would regain her. He lurked in the bushes until he saw Captain Wallace appear, watched him, trusted him, and went away.

"He learned of the child's adoption, and for years he haunted her home, her school, all places that were her residence, ever craving her, ever restrained by the realization that, till his name was cleared, he had no right to her. His idea of vindication had become, as I said, a monomania.

"Now, gentlemen, I have little time to spare, but I must carry this story to the end. I said that he had less faith in himself than he had in God. Once, for three years, Hampton lost his child. She had gone to San Francisco. In his despair he went to Wash-

"No, sir, it is not!" thundered the General. "It is on the evidence of the woman Hilda Morsheim, alias Kenson, secured by Hampton under circumstances which—"

Kellerman uttered a low cry; he was trembling now, and all his bravado seemed to have oozed away.

"This woman, strangely enough, loved her confederate," went on the General remorselessly, fixing his eyes full on Kellerman's now, while Kellerman blinked like a bat in daylight, and turned his head weakly from side to side, as if under the intolerable glare of a searchlight. "Her claims on him were strong enough, God knows! She wanted him to marry her, to take her away from the old scenes that they might have a chance to redeem their wretched lives together. He had promised her that so many times—and the worst of women is as wax in the hands of the man she loves.

"But he had become infatuated with another, with a girl as much above him as—"

With a cry that seemed hardly human Colonel Howard sprang toward Kellerman, his fingers twitching as if he sought to fasten them about his throat. Mark caught him and held him, while the old man swayed to and fro, his outstretched arm extended toward Kellerman as if in imprecation.

Eleanor, at Hartley's side, did not even look toward them.

"This woman, Morsheim—Kenson—whatever you call her, came to France, upon receipt of a message which had cut her to the heart, shown her the hopelessness of her dreams, and taught her that the one man in whom she had believed was worthless clay. To do her justice, let us suppose that, even in her worst acts, she had been sustained by a sense of duty to her country.

"She met her confederate in an inn at a village not far distant. Frantic at her appearance, he induced her to let him drive her back through the lines, and on the way renewed his lying promises. This time she doubted him.

"Two men had overheard their conversation. One was Captain Wallace, whom the pair had broken as they broke poor Hampton. Him the traitor had seen, and he devised a scheme to send him to the trenches and contrive to have him sent on a false and fatal errand. With that point I shall not now deal. The other man was Hampton, who had enlisted under an alias, in the belief that he would obtain a clue that would unmask the traitor. He contrived to go back through the lines, found the woman, and somehow—perhaps by God's wonderful mercy—obtained her signed confession—which I have here, in full!"

He wheeled upon Kellerman. "Major Kellerman," he said in a deep voice that vibrated almost with pity, so charged with significance that its meaning could not escape either Howard or Mark, "you are under arrest. You will go toward your quarters, first removing your belt and arms."

Kellerman saluted weakly and stumbled out of the cave. The General looked at Mark.

"The soldier Weston receives a free and full pardon for his valor in the field this day," he said. "He is also discharged honorably from the service of the United States government."

Mark looked at the general in astonishment; this was the last thing that he desired.

The General approached and clapped him on the shoulder. "Captain Wallace," he said, "your written resignation from the United States army cannot be accepted, owing to the state of war. After the war it will receive consideration. In the meantime you will resume your duties on the headquarters staff."

Tears rushed to Mark's eyes. He tried to speak, he was conscious that the General and Howard were shaking him by the hand; and then a quick glance from Eleanor drew him to where she knelt by Hartley.

A single look showed him that the man was dying.

Mark knelt on one side of him, with Eleanor facing him over the stretcher. The bearers, who had fallen back, stood still as images behind. And behind them Mark had the dim consciousness in the background of his mind of Kellerman, broken as he had broken so many, and fumbling, always fumbling, now with his tunic, now with the belt that he was trying to detach with shaking fingers.

"Hartley!" whispered Mark, holding the dying man's hand in his. "That was you today—I missed you, but I believed in you. You saved me."

There was a fluttering pressure of Mark's hand in turn. Hampton was speaking; he was asking for the Colonel.

"I am here, Hampton," said Colonel Howard in a choked voice, as he leaned over him.

"You believe in me now, sir?" muttered the dying man, rolling his head uneasily in the effort to see.

"May God forgive me, Hampton! May she—your wife—forgive me. Tell her that, and tell her her words came true. I betrayed my best friend, and I've suffered for it, and I shall suffer to the last day of my life."

"She forgives you, Howard," said Hampton, speaking now with such solemnity that his words seemed to his listeners to be inspired. "There's only one thing—I want, Howard, old man."

"Yes, my dear boy—yes, Hampton." "Put my name—back on the mess list," whispered Hampton.

Through his tears Mark was conscious that the interminable fumbling outside the cave had ceased. As Hampton fell back there came the sudden crack of a revolver shot.

The General's form blocked the entrance as they raised their heads. Mark placed his hands across Eleanor's eyes and drew her away.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Perhaps it was because they had seen so many horrors during the past four-and-twenty hours that these seemed all to have fallen away that night at staff headquarters. There was a brief hour of rest after interminable labors, the lines had been held and the great assault repelled in confusion; for that hour every man seemed bent upon forgetting the incidents of war, and something like gaiety ruled in the messroom.

All the past seemed very far away to Captain Mark Wallace as he stood with Eleanor in the little cottage garden.

"When the auto comes to take you back to the hospital I shall feel that my new life has lost the best part of its promise," said Mark.

It was a long and extraordinarily imaginative speech for him, and he stood shamefaced after he had said it, like a boy who has delivered a grown man's aphorism.

"Captain Mark," said Eleanor, "you knew who I was, and you could not—you could not have believed my father innocent, and yet you had faith in me. You must have suffered when I used to talk about my dreams of him, and you hid your suffering and your knowledge because of me."

"That was nothing, Eleanor." "Captain Mark," she whispered, bending toward him. "I—I kissed you today."

"That was nothing, Eleanor." "Captain Mark! What do you mean? How dare you!"

Mark looked utterly disconcerted. "I mean—I mean, Eleanor, I'm just your old guardian—a sort of old friend, you know, and you were glad I had come back safe."

"O Captain Mark!" said Eleanor, shaking with helpless laughter which disconcerted him still more; and yet he thought her lashes were wet with tears. "Captain Mark, are you really going to make me say it?"

"Say what, my dear?"

"That it ought to have been you."

"But you mustn't let that worry you, Eleanor. It's often done in such cases—I just thought you were too old to kiss. You know, I wanted to—"

"O thank you, thank you," said Eleanor wearily. "Captain Mark, you dear, absurd guardian of mine, I see you aren't going to spare me. So listen. I love you, and have loved you only, and nobody but you, all through my life. From the time I got your first letters to the time you came to see me at the Misses Harpers' school, and from then to now."

Mark looked at her in incredulous joy; he was no longer capable of feeling astonishment, but it all seemed like a happy dream, unreliable but, while it lasted, dear beyond all imagining.

"The Colonel knew it. And—others. Everybody did but you. And do you know why I have told you what I've often plined myself to keep from telling you? Because you loved me without exactly knowing it—"

"But I did know it, my dear."

"Without exactly knowing it, and when you admitted a little bit of it to yourself you were prompted to commit those foolish acts, to be so rude to me and hurt me so much. But a woman is never deceived. She always knows. I knew."

"My dear," said Mark solemnly, "you have been everything in the world to me since that very first day outside Santiago."

"Of course I have. As you have been to me. And that is why I told you, so that we two should not be unhappy all our lives. You see, dear Captain Mark, it isn't as if you didn't care for me. If I had cared and you hadn't, I should have hidden my feelings and never let you dream of them, and you never would have. So it's really you who have told me all this, and I've just been interpreting your thoughts, because all I did just now was to tell you what you wanted to tell me without knowing that you wanted to tell me what you did want all the time. Isn't that so, Captain Mark?"

"Yes," answered Mark, feeling completely at sea, but incapable of contradicting anything that Eleanor chose to say.

"Isn't that so, Mark, dear?"

"Of course it is," said Mark.

"So you have actually told me that you care for me, and you want me to give you my answer. Is that what you want me to understand, Captain Mark?"

"Yes, my dear, of course it is," answered Mark.

Eleanor looked down thoughtfully. "Well, I'm not sure," she said, in a meditative manner. "You know, you have been terribly, abominably rude to me so often."

Mark had a great horror of losing her.

"And you've broken your solemn promise, and you can't imagine what a shock that gave me, because I idealized you in a childish way, and I never dreamed that you were capable of not keeping your word, Captain Mark."

"I, Eleanor?" asked Mark in bewilderment. "Eleanor, surely I never promised anything that I didn't do."

"Do you remember that evening in Washington, the evening when you came to see us, and we didn't get on well together at all, at first?"

"And suddenly you became the little girl that I had adopted, Eleanor."

"And suddenly you became my dear Uncle Mark again! Well, do you re-



"I Love You and Have Loved You Only."

member, promising me that you would never give me up any more, no matter who might seem to have a better claim on me? Do you remember that, Captain Mark—Mark?"

"Of course I do, dear, but you were speaking of guardians?"

"I, Captain Mark? Guardians?" she asked. "I was speaking of—"

"Of Colonel Howard and me."

"Of you, dear. Just of you," answered Eleanor. "So won't you please, please not make me humble myself again, and take me into your arms and—"

—and kiss me!"

(THE END.)

SURELY SOME CRAP SHOOTER

Dusky Stevedore in France Was Rapidly Getting Rich at Expense of His Comrades.

They used to shoot some craps in stevedore's company No. —, but they don't any more. This as a consequence of a stern company order issued after a prolonged argument with the dice which followed the first payday on this side.

There was a game at every opportunity for about a week, and then came a lull. Simultaneously with the lull the men began to turn up shy of apparel and equipment. Investigation disclosed that one dusky private with a pair of dice that behaved particularly well had made a sensational clean-up.

He had gathered most of the francs in the company in the first three days and then started on personal effects. At the conclusion of the series he had nearly enough francs to finance a war of his own and more clothes than the supply sergeant not to speak of 36 identification tags, seven boxes of C.C. pills, a bottle of castor oil, 11 towels, most of the soap in the company and a packing case full of other articles. At the suggestion of the captain he returned all of the belongings and most of the francs.

"Ah learned dat game in de old Tenth cavalry," he exclaimed, "and Ah just wanted to show dese new soldiers dat dey didn't know nuffin' about it." —Stars and Stripes.

Self-Sacrifice.
"Has he war made any change in Spongleigh?"

"I should say so!"

"In what respect?"

"Spongleigh says that in view of the fact that his friends are buying Liberty bonds and contributing to war philanthropies, he considers it his patriotic duty not to borrow more than \$5 at a time from any of them." —Birmingham Age-Herald.

For Early Spring Street Wear



If it is to be a contest between the one-piece trottéur and the two-piece suit for springtime street wear, such handsome outfits as that pictured above will help the cause of suits immensely. Suits have turned in the direction of unusual lines. What with Chinese coats that have proved so effective in the popular short fur coats for midwinter, and the straight up-and-down models that have just appeared in the handsomest materials, and sleeves that flare at the wrist or go to the opposite extreme and are skin tight, suits have not by any means played all their trump cards. Skirts are narrow and plain, distinguished by many variations as to management of waistline and pockets. They are no longer than for some time, but, as to coats, one cannot generalize—there is too great a variety in them, too much individuality of design.

The chic suit in the picture is an example of an individual style, which manages an almost straight-line silhouette in spite of some fullness in its skirt. The broad, shaped girdle is placed somewhat below the waistline, fastening to the left with a buckle, and there is an odd group of tucks stitched in oblongs with parallel sides.

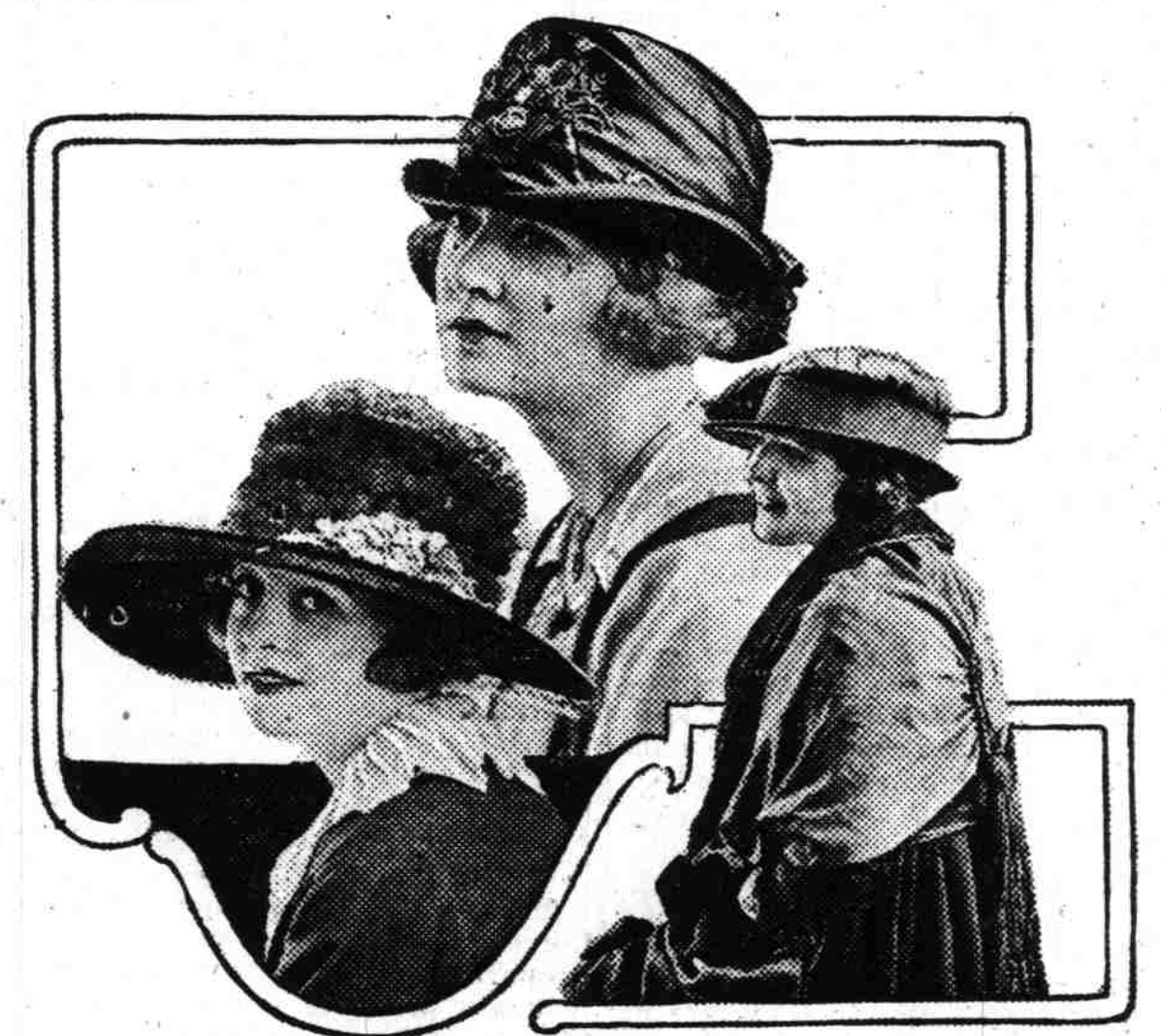
which the tailor must have put in just to show how expert his work can be, or to make up for pockets which he has had the hardihood to omit. This omission is indeed unusual. Velvet in bands replaces fur as a trimming, finishing the pointed bottom of the coat and placed at the top of the small, close-fitting cuff. It overlays the collar at the back and part way down the sides.

It is early in the season to consider suits for spring, but spring arrives in January or February in our southern states; we shall have time to study suits and the trottéur long before the approach of Easter, when we are expected to be suited or otherwise outfitted in the North.

It's Quality Now.

As simplicity is the keynote of fashion just now, it has developed naturally, if somewhat quickly, that women are paying very much more attention to the quality of merchandise. The finer cloths in all ready-to-wear apparel are appreciated most. Perhaps they buy fewer garments, but there is no doubting that the better ones are selling first.

Three Hats for Southern Tourists



Such an exodus south is promised, and is, in fact, under way, that the business of furnishing apparel for southern tourists is a more important factor in merchandising than ever before. Nearly all these birds of passage among us mortals are people in easy circumstances, to say the least, and many of them are in a position to command the best in apparel, as in everything else that money can buy. It is an educated, discriminating and exacting taste in clothes that designers must satisfy when they undertake to suit the fashionables that congregate under sunny skies in midwinter. They are there to see and to be seen, and it is not likely that there is any greater fashion parade anywhere than in our own famed American winter resorts.

In millinery there are hats that have their try-outs in the South and become established as styles for spring; they are, therefore, interesting to every woman. A group of three of them appears above, one for dress, one for semidress and one for going-about, the last having a light wrap made to match it.

The semidress hat at the top of the group is a favorite shape of times gone by, which reappears in this graceful interpretation of the English walking hat. Its brim, curving up at each

side, reveals a facing of brilliant slipper-straw, bound at the edge with a narrow fold of satin. The crown is entirely covered with satin, draped over it and tied at the back in the most casual way imaginable. At the front a basket of flowers is embroidered on the satin. This simple-seeming hat is, in reality, a difficult affair to make, for each separate little straw has to be placed in position with perfect accuracy. A hat of this kind might be made in any of the fashionable suiting colors with facing in black.

At the left a satin-covered hat in black has a crown beruffled with hair-braid lace and a border of it falling from the brim edge. A bouquet of spring flowers is posed against the side crown. It is a picturesque and summery creation—a forerunner of wide brimmed models that may be expected to arrive in force next summer.

The sailor shape with soft crown, shown at the right, has no adornment but a big tassel. It is developed in beige color, with braid brim and satin crown. The wide scarf has a long turned-back velvet collar and is gathered at the back, from which long, heavy silk tassels are suspended.

Julia Bottomley